ROCKY POINT FIRE (6499) BURNED AREA EMERGENCY STABILIZATION AND REHABILITATION (ESR) PLAN

AGENCY/UNIT: Charles M. Russell National Wildli	fe Refuge	
LOCATION: Lewistown, Fergus County, Montana		
DATE: June 6, 2002		
PREPARED BY: Mike Granger, Fire Management O	fficer	
Submitted By:	Date:	
Mike Hedrick, Project Leader		

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge

I.	Suppression Operations Funding Approval (check one box below):
	* Disapproved Disapproved Disapproved
M	ike Hedrick, Project Leader, Date
II.	Burned Area Rehabilitation (9262) Funding Approval (check one box below):
	* Approved * Disapproved Disapproved
Ti	tle Date
	egional Fire Management Coordinator concurrence that the plan fits the technical definition for use Burned Area Rehabilitation finding. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Only)
Re	egional Fire Management Coordinator, Region Date

III. Agency Operational B	Base Funding Approval (check one box below):	
Approved Approved with Re Disapproved	evision (see attached)	
Title	Date	
III.Burned Area Rehabili	itation Funding Approval (check one box below):	
Approved Approved with Re		
* Disapproved with Re	evision (see attached)	
Title	Date	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This plan has been prepared in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service policy. This plan provides Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) recommendations for lands burned within the Rocky Point and Rock Creek fire perimeters and downstream impact areas. The primary objectives of the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan are:

Emergency Stabilization

- " To prescribe cost effective post-fire stabilization measures necessary to protect human life, property, and critical cultural and natural resources.
- " To promptly stabilize and prevent further degradation to affected resources on lands within the fire perimeter or downstream impact areas and mitigate damages caused by fire suppression operations in accordance with approved land management plans and policies, and all relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Rehabilitation

- " To repair or improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage by emulating historic or pre-fire ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics according to approved land management plans.
- " Restore or establish healthy, stable ecosystems, even if these ecosystems cannot fully emulate historic or pre-fire conditions as specified in approved land management plans.

This plan addresses emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of fire suppression and fire damages.

The Refuge FMO, Range Tech and GIS/Ecologist surveyed the area for resource damage beyond what would naturally revegetate within an acceptable time frame. It was determined an aggressive re-seeding campaign was needed to reduce the invasion of weeds within the burn unit.

The ESR team consisted of Mike Granger, FMO, Matt Plagenz, Range Technician, Steve Henry GIS Coordinator/Ecologist, Matt DeRosier, Station Manager, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. On the morning of May 14, 2002 the team did an on-site evaluation of the Rocky Point burn area. The area burned by the fire was dominated by mature Great Plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), willow (*Salix sp.*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and various cool season grass species.

The team found extensive damage to the riparian area. Most large cottonwoods were severely damaged or killed by the fire. Fire intensity was extreme within most of the burned area. Almost 100 acres of the burned area was reduced to nothing but a 1-2 inch ash layer. Sedimentary erosion can be expected to increase due to the complete lack of vegetation within the center of the burn unit. Weed infestation will be extreme if left to natural processes.

A summary of the costs by jurisdictions is in Part E. Appendix II contains the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documentation summary. Appendix III contains photo documentation. Appendix IV contains a map of the burned area and current weed infestations.

Fire Background

The fire started in the Rock Creek campground on May 4 of human causes. Engine resources from CMR and BLM were dispatched to the fire. Winds and spotting caused the fire to jump the Missouri River into the Turner Bottom. The fires were managed as two incidents (Rock Creek Fire and Rocky Point Fire) Fire intensity was extreme as the area is experiencing a four year drought, winds were in excess of 20 mph, and greenup had yet to occur. The fires were contained on May 5 but high winds caused a flare-up on May 13 resulting in another 50 acres being burned.

Resources on the fires were 6 light engines fully staffed and one light helicopter. A hand crew was utilized on the flare-up.

Fire Damages and Threats to Human Safety and Natural and Cultural Resources

No significant damages were caused by fire suppression activities. Rocky Point Historical site is immediately adjacent to the burn unit. No damage occurred to this facility due to fire suppression activities. The current burned area condition poses a threat to human safety as many snags are standing and have the potential to fall.

Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Management Requirements

The area lies within the CMR National Wildlife Refuge and is adjacent to an important recreational area (Rock Creek boat ramp and campground). The site is popular for boating and is used by tourists and local residents alike.

Emergency Stabilization

The burned area presents an opportunity to prevent the invasive Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) and Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) from further invading this area by restoring the native plant community. Restoring native plants will help stabilize soils by mitigating gully and sheet erosion of soil, ash, and woody debris, thereby reducing the erosion of these elements and their impacts to the lower watershed and riparian habitat. Guidance for rehabilitation of wildfire areas is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Handbook (Release: 7/17/00) and 095 FW3 (2/00). Guidance limits the use of fire rehabilitation funds to stabilize soils and biotic communities no later than 2 growing seasons, or a maximum of 3 years after initial plan approval. The stabilization of biotic communities should minimize unacceptable changes to ecosystem structure and function resulting from wildfire. Such stabilization allows for the establishment of shrubs, forbs, grasses, and trees if demonstrated to meet project objectives. Also allowed are efforts to minimize the establishment of non-native invasive species to prevent burned area degradation.

Rehabilitation

The following statements in approved Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge management plans justify the proposed burned area rehabilitation treatments funded with Burned Area Rehabilitation funds.

Habitat analysis indicates deciduous shrub communities are in short supply on the refuge, and historical accounts indicate shrubs were once more abundant than they are today. A combination of actions would be taken to improve the present situation.

Management actions would probably be adjustment in grazing, burning, and planting, in that order. Shrubs would be planted to reestablish a seed source for natural revegetation. (Charles M. Russell Final Environmental Impact Statement; Galen Buterbaugh, Regional Director, Region 6; August 1985.)

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PART A - FIRE LOCATION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fire Name	Rocky Point & Rock Creek
Fire Number	6499 & 6498
Agency Unit	61520
Region	6
State	MT
County(s)	Fergus
Ignition Date/Cause	May 4, 2002
Zone	
Date Controlled	May 14, 2002
Jurisdiction	685 acres
Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge	
Total Acres	685
Date Contained	May 14, 2002

PART B - NATURE OF PLAN

I. Type of Plan (check one box below)

	(
	Emergency Stabilization
	Rehabilitation
x	Both Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

II. Type of Action (check one box below)

x	Initial Submission
	Updating or Revising the Initial Submission
	Supplying Information of Accomplishment to Date on Work
	Different Phase of Project
	Final Accomplishment Report (To Comply with the Closure of the 9262 Account)

PART C - EMERGENCY STABILIZATION AND REHABILITATION ASSESSMENT

Emergency Stabilization Objectives

" re-establish native shrubs and trees to prevent excess erosion and site degregation

Rehabilitation Objectives

- " Prevent aggressive regrowth and re-establishment of undesirable exotic plant species such as Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) and Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*).
- " Restablishment of native plant community.

PART D - TEAM ORGANIZATION, MEMBERS, AND RESOURCE ADVISORS

I. Approval Authorities

Activities Requiring Regional/State/Headquarters Approval Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (charged to BAR)	Status	Cost
Re-seed 685 acres of burned area with native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Re-establish cottonwoods and willow within the floodplain of the burn unit.	P	\$55,000
Subtotal	·	\$55,000
Status: C=Completed,; O=Ongoing; P=Planned		

Total Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Costs \$55,000

II. Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR)Team Members:

Position	Team Member (Agency)				
Team Leader	Mike Granger (FWS)				
Operations	Matt Plagenz (FWS)				
Vegetation Specialist	Ben Pratt (FWS)				
Wildlife Biologist	Randy Matchett (FWS)				
GIS Specialist	Steve Henry (FWS)				
Photographer	Matt DeRosier				
Other Technical Specialists					

III. Resource Advisor

Name	Affiliation
Mike Hedrick	Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge NWR, Project Leader

PART E - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

The summary of activities and cost table below identifies emergency stabilization and rehabilitation costs charged or proposed for funding from Suppression Operations, Burned Area Rehabilitation, agency operation, and other funding sources. Expenditures are displayed in the total cost column. They are coded with the appropriate cost authority. The total cost of the rehabilitation effort to date, excluding the costs absorbed by the fire account (fire crews, labor, and associated overhead) is displayed as either Suppression Operations (F), Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR), Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP), or Agency Operations/Other (O/OP) or other.

Fire Name: Rocky Point

As of June 13, 2002.

Specification Cost Summary

Account	Dollars			
Fire Suppression Activity Damage Rehabilitation (F)		\$0		
Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR)		\$0		
Emergency Stabilization				
Rehabilitation	\$ 55,000	\$55,000		
Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)		\$0		
Agency Operations/Other (OP/O)		\$0		
Funding Summary - Estimated Total		\$55,000		

PART E - SUMMARY OF REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES - COST SUMMARY TABLE - Rocky Point Fire

									<i>-</i>	
Spec					# of	Cost by Fun	ding Source	Implementation	Sp	
#	Title	Unit	Un	it Cost	Units	BAR	OP/O	Method		Total
25%	Western Wheatgrass Planting	pound	\$	1.99	1644	\$ 3,272		P,C	\$	3,272
15%	Slender Wheatgrass planting		\$	1.29	986	\$ 1,272		P,C	\$	1,272
10%	Bluebunch wheatgrass planting		\$	12.99	768	\$ 9,976		P,C	\$	9,976
8%	Green needlegrass planting		\$	4.99	528	\$ 2,635		P,C	\$	2,635
8%	Sandberg s bluegrass planting		\$	6.99	89	\$ 622		P,C	\$	622
8%	Prairie Sandreed planting		\$	19.99	349	\$ 6,279		P,C	\$	6,279
3%	Needle-and-Thread grass planting		\$	59.00	226	\$ 13,334		P,C	\$	13,334
2%	Yarrow planting		\$	29.00	6	\$ 174		P,C	\$	174
2%	Western snowberry		\$	112.00	22	\$ 2,464		P,C	\$	2,464
3%	Prairie Sage		\$	69.00	7	\$ 483		P,C	\$	483
2%	Buffalograss		\$	9.99	199	\$ 1,988		P,C	\$	1,988
5%	Blue grama		\$	14.59	165	\$ 2,407		P,C	\$	2,407
5%	Prairie Junegrass		\$	23.49	54	\$ 1,268		P,C	\$	1,268
4%	Canada Wildrye		\$	9.99	308	\$ 3,077		P,C	\$	3,077
	Seed Mixing					\$ 385		С	\$	385
	TOTAL COST					\$ 49,636	\$ 0		\$	49,636

COST: BAR=Burned Area Rehabilitation, OP/O=Agency Operations Funding, Other METHOD: FC=Crew Assigned to Fire, C=Contract, EFC=Emergency Fire Contract, P=Agency Personnel

PART F - INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION TITLE:	Re-seed burned area	AGENCY:	FWS
PART E LINE ITEM:		FISCAL YEAR(S) (list each year):	2002

I. WORK TO BE DONE (describe or attach exact specifications of work to be done): Number and Describe Each Task: Aerial re-seed 685 acres of the Rocky Point and Rock Creek Fires. A. General Description: Use a contract helicopter to aerial reseed the Rocky Point and Rock Creek burn areas. B. Location/(Suitable) Sites: Rocky Point burn. C. Design/Construction Specifications: 1. Aerial re-seed 685 acres at 30 seeds per square foot with seed mix as desribed above. 2. D. Purpose of Treatment Specifications: To re-establish native vegetation and limit invasion of non-native invasive weeds. E. Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring Proposed:

II. LABOR, MATERIALS AND OTHER COST:

PERSONNEL SERVICES: (Grade @ Cost/Hours X # Ho urs X # Fiscal Years = Cost/Item): Do not include contract personnel costs here (see contractor services below).	
4- GS3 x 11.00 per hour x 8 hours for re-seeding	\$352
TOTAL PERSONNEL SERVICE COST	\$
EQUIPMENT PURCHASE, LEASE AND/OR RENT (Item @ Cost/Ho ur X # of Hours X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item): Note: Purchases require written justification that demonstrates cost benefits over leasing or renting.	COST/ITEM
TOTAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASE, LEASE OR RENTAL COST	
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES (Item @ Cost/Each X Quantity X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):	COST/ITEM
TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLY COST	
TRAVEL COST (Personnel or Equipment @ Rate X Round Trips X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):	COST/ITEM
	\$0
TOTAL TRAVEL COST	
CONTRACT COST (Labor or Equipment @ Cost/Hour X #Hours X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):	COST/ITEM
Bell 206 Helicopter at \$600 per hour x 8 hours	\$4,800
TOTAL CONTRACT COST	\$

SPECIFICATION COST SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR	UNIT	UNITS COST	# OF UNITS	COST	FUNDING SOURCE	METHOD
FY_02_	Rocky Point & Rock Creek fires	\$55,000.00	1.0	\$55,000	BAR	P,C
FY						
FY						
FY						
FY						
TOTAL		\$55,000.00	1.0	\$55,000	BAR	P,C

FUNDING SOURCE

METHODS

F - Suppression Operations **BAR** - Burned Area Rehabilitation

P - Agency Personnel ServicesC - Contract (long-term)

EWP - Emergency Watershed Protection
OP/O - Agency Operations/Other

EFC - Emergency Fire Contract (short-term) **FC** - Incident Management Crew Assignment

SOURCE OF COST ESTIMATE

	1. Estimate obtained from 2-3 independent contractual sources.	
1	2. Documented cost figures from similar project work obtained from local agency sources.	
	3. Estimate supported by cost guides from independent sources or other federal agencies	
4	4. Estimates based upon government wage rates and material cost.	X
	5. No cost estimate required - cost charged to Fire Suppression Account	

P = Personnel Services, E = Equipment M = Materials/Supplies, T = Travel, C = Contract, F = Suppression

III. RELEVANT DETAILS, MAPS AND DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT:

List Relevant Documentation and Cross-Reference Location within ESR Plan Accomplishment Report (for Rehabilitation treatments quote (include page number, approving officials name, and date approved for review and auditing purposes) pertinent passages from approved land management plans:

$\textbf{PART} \; \textbf{G} \; \textbf{-POST-REHABILITATION} \; \textbf{REQUIREMENT}^1$

The following are post-rehabilitation, implementation, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation actions beyond three years to ensure the effectiveness of initial investments. Estimated annual cost and funding source is indicated.

Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

- 1. Long-term Monitoring
 - A. Monitor riparian vegetation recovery (\$1,000 OP/O)

¹ Non-9262 funding

APPENDIX I - ESR BURNED AREA ASSESSMENT REPORTS

ROCKY POINT RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

I. Objectives

To determine the extent of fire damage caused by the Rocky Point and Rock Creek fires, May 4-14, 2002.

II. Observations

A. Background Information

The Rocky Point and Rock Creek fires burned approximately 685 acres of river bottom along the Missouri River on May 4-14, 2002. The fire was human caused, starting in the Rock Creek boat ramp and spotting across the river into Turner Bottom. The fire was spread by high winds. The area is in a four year drought. At the time of the fire, live fuel moistures (50-60%) were below normal (110-130%). Dead fuel moistures were extremely low 3-7%. The fire completely consumed all vegetation (both live and dead) within the 100 acre center of the burn. Some cottonwood stump holes burned 3 feet into the ground.

B. Reconnaissance Method

Team members surveyed the area by foot and helicopter.

C. Findings

Team members determined the area would need to be replanted with a mixture of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. This would prevent domination of the area by noxious weeds such as Canada thistle, leafy spruge and Russian knapweed. Since the area is within a floodplain, natural processes will re-establish the willow and cottonwood.

III. Recommendations

A. Management

Re-plant native grasses, forbs and shrubs on approximately 100 acres of the Rocky Point fire.

B. Specification Monitoring

Follow-up monitoring of the seeded area by refuge staff to determine seeding effectiveness will occur for three years, post seeding. Monitoring will consist of point counts and photo documentation.

IV. Consultations

CMR Staff

V. References

Charles M. Russell NWR Environmental Impact Statement, 1985.

APPENDIX II - ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Federal, State, and Private Lands Environmental Compliance Responsibilities

All projects proposed in the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan that are prescribed, funded, or implemented by Federal agencies on Federal, State, or private lands are subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Handbook (Release 7/17/00) and 095 FW3, 3.9 B,C.. This Appendix documents the ESR Team considerations of NEPA compliance requirements for prescribed rehabilitation and monitoring actions described in this plan for all jurisdictions affected by the Rocky Point burned area emergency.

Related Plans and Cumulative Impact Analysis

Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Impact Statement (1985) was reviewed and it was determined that actions proposed in the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan within the boundary of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge are consistent with the management objectives established in the FEIS.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative effects are the environmental impacts resulting from the incremental impacts of a proposed action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, both Federal and non-Federal. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. The emergency protection and rehabilitation treatments for areas affected by the Rocky Point fire, as proposed in the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan, do not result in an intensity of impact (i.e. major ground disturbance, etc.) that would cumulatively constitute a significant impact on the quality of the environment. The treatments are consistent with the above jurisdictional management plans and associated environmental compliance documents and categorical exclusions listed below.

Applicable and Relevant Categorical Exclusions

The individual actions proposed in this plan for rehabilitation of the Rocky Point fire are Categorically Excluded from further environmental analysis as provided for in DM 516, DM 6, Appendix 1, 1.4 (4), (5), (6), (9), and (11).

Statement of Compliance for the Rocky Point Fire Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan.

This section documents consideration given to the requirements of specific environmental laws in the development of the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan. Specific consultations initiated or completed during development and implementation of this plan are also documented. The following executive orders and legislative acts have been reviewed as they apply to the Rocky Point Fire ESR Plan:

- " National Historic Preservation Art (NHPA).
- " Executive Order 11988. Floodplain Management.
- " Executive Order 11990. Protection of Wetlands.
- " Executive Order 12372. Intergovernmental Review.
- " Executive Order 12892. Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-income Populations.
- " Endangered Species Act.
- " Secretarial Order 3127. Federal Contaminated
- " Clean Water Act.
- " Clean Air Act.

NEPA Checklist: If any of the following exception applies, the ESR Plan cannot be Categorically Excluded and an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required.

(Yes)	(No)				
()		Adversely affect Public Health and Safety			
()	()	Adversely affect historic or cultural resources, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers aquifers prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, ecologically critical areas, or Natural Landmarks.			
()	()	Have highly controversial environmental effects.			
		Have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.			
()	()	Establish a precedent resulting in significant environmental effects.			
()	()	Relates to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.			
()	()	Adversely effects properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places			
()	()	Adversely affect a species listed or proposed to be listed as Threatened or Endangered. Threaten to violate any laws or requirements imposted for the "protection of the environment" such as Executive Order 1 1 988 (Floodplain Management) or Executive Order 1 1 990 (Protection of Wetlands).			
Natio	nal Hist	toric Preservation Act			
Groun	d Distu	rbance:			
()		e und disturbance did occur and an archeologist survey, required under section 110 of the PA will be prepared. A report will be prepared under contract as specified by the ESR Plan.			
A NH	PA Clea	arance Form:			
()	-	aired because the project may have affected a site that is eligible or on the national register. earance form is attached. SHPO has been consulted under Section 106.			
()	Is not	not required because the ESR Plan has no potential to affect cultural resources (initial of tural resource specialist).			
Other	Requi	rements			
(Yes)	(No)				
()	()	Does the ESR Plan have potential to affect any Native American uses? If so, consultation with affiliated tribes is needed.			
()	()	Are any toxic chemicals, including pesticides or treated wood, proposed for use? If so, local agency integrated pest management specialists must be consulted.			

I have reviewed the proposals in the Rocky Point Fire Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan in accordance with the criteria above and have determined that the proposed actions would not involve any significant environmental effect. Therefore it is categorically excluded from

further environmental (NEPA) review and documentation. ES completed necessary coordination and consultation to insure consultation Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act are environment review requirements.	ompliance with the National Historic
ESR Team Environmental Protection Specialist	Date
Project Leader, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge	Date

APPENDIX III - PHOTO DOCUMENTATION